Meet and 3 festival continues in downtown



Jessica Nelms/Staff

Gerald Flaherty, left, and Tom Cain check out some of the classic cars during the Cruise-In in Seneca, on Friday afternoon.



Special to the Daily Journal/Messenger

The Bellamy Brothers perform tonight at Seneca's Meet and 3 festival.

Seneca

Bellamy Brothers are tonight's headliners

By WAYNE MORTON
Special to the Daily Journal/Messenger

Few American musical duos have achieved what the Bellamy Brothers of Darby, Fla., have in their 40 years of writing and performing, and they are still in high demand worldwide.

The pair has just returned from a six-country European tour and will bring their deeply-rooted Southern stylings to the stage at Seneca's Norton-Thompson Park today as a finale to the two-day Meet and 3 Memorial Day celebration sponsored by the city of Seneca.

"We have family roots in Horry County of South Carolina, and we look

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forward to seeing the folks in the Upstate," older brother Howard, 63, said in an interview this week.

"We are simply amazed and very blessed to still have a wide international fan base, and we absolutely love what we do."

The Bellamy Brothers have charted 20 No. 1 singles including Billboard magazine's number one single for 1976, "Let Your Love Flow."

Howard recalled how the song came to them.

"It just really dropped in our laps when we developed a friendship with Neil Diamond's band in our early career," he said. "Dennis St. John, the band's drummer, brought us the song which was written by another band member named Larry Williams.

"Dennis said he thought the song would suit us and boy, did it ever!"

"Let Your Love Flow" quickly became the duo's signature song, reaching No. 1 in the U.S., Great Britain, Germany and Scandinavia. The success of the song, with their others hits in 40 recorded albums, catapulted the Bellamy's to No. 83 on the list of 100 County Music Artists of all time, just ahead of Randy Travis and slightly behind Ricky Skaggs.

Other hits include "Dancing Cowboys," "Whistlin' Dixie," "Sugar Daddy" and a song based on a quote by the late comedian Groucho Marx.

"I guess it really shows our age, but his quote inspired the song 'If I Said You Had A Beautiful Body Would You Hold It Against Me?', Howard said. "It was just an amazing thing that everyone seemed to like." The song hit No. 1 in Ireland before becoming a hit in America.

In the past few years, there has been a plethora of successful gospel albums recorded by country artists, notably Alabama, Alan Jackson, Vince Gill and others. Two years ago, the Bellamy's released the project "Jesus Is Coming," a crafted collection of new songs that enabled the brothers to express their faith and their unique perspective. The project garnered two Dove Awards and helped the duo earn Inspirational Group of the Year in Christian Country Music. The song "Drug Problem" was a major hit, and "Lord Help Me Be The Kind Of Person My Dog Thinks I Am" from the project continues to climb the gospel and country charts.

"We both began singing in church, grew up in a church and have always wanted to do a project like this," Howard said. "In fact, we are working on a second gospel album and another country project, and they both should be out toward the end of the year."

Both men hold degrees from the University of Florida. David has a degree in psychology, and Howard has a degree in veterinary medicine. "We figured we would have something to fall back on if this music thing didn't work out," he said with a laugh.

Appearing with the Bellamy Brothers today will be Alamo and Bad Creek, both accomplished local groups.

The concerts, which begin at 4 p.m., are free.

Wayne Morton is the operations manager and host of "The Morning Show" on 96.3 WGOG.